Proposal for inclusion of the Lepcha caste in Primitive Groups

2238. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that State Government of Sikkim has passed a proposal in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly to include Lepcha caste in Primitive Groups;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the above proposal is pending with the Central Government, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In the resolution passed by the Sikkim Legislative Assembly it has been *inter alia,* stated that the growth of the Lepcha population is almost stagnant and the literacy rate is very low; most of them live in far flung areas and are not exposed to modern environment; they are socially, economically, educationally and politically very backward, their living conditions has remained primitive. Therefore, in order to protect and safeguard the vanishing tribe and to give them a distinct identity, the Assembly has resolved that the Lepchas be declared as a Primitive Tribe Groups.

(c) and (d) The proposal received from the Government of Sikkim has been examined as per the prescribed criteria for declaring a community as a PTG, and on the basis of the census figures of 2001, 1991 and 1981. The Lepcha community does not qualify to be declared a PTG according to these criteria.

Schemes for vocational training centres for Tribals in Sikkim

2239. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme for setting up of vocational training centres/courses in the North-Eastern Region particularly in the State of Sikkim for unemployed tribal men/women;

(b) if so, the details thereof;